

serves, under administrative procedures determined by the Administrator.

(b) The eligible telecommunications carrier may receive universal service support reimbursement for each qualifying low-income consumer served. For each consumer receiving Lifeline service, the reimbursement amount shall equal the federal support amount, including the support amount described in § 54.403(c). The eligible telecommunications carrier's universal service support reimbursement shall not exceed the carrier's standard, non-Lifeline rate.

(c) In order to receive universal service support reimbursement, the eligible telecommunications carrier must keep accurate records of the revenues it forgoes in providing Lifeline in conformity with § 54.401. Such records shall be kept in the form directed by the Administrator and provided to the Administrator at intervals as directed by the Administrator or as provided in this Subpart.

**§ 54.409 Consumer qualification for Lifeline.**

(a) To qualify to receive Lifeline service in a state that mandates state Lifeline support, a consumer must meet the eligibility criteria established by the state commission for such support. The state commission shall establish narrowly targeted qualification criteria that are based solely on income or factors directly related to income. A state containing geographic areas included in the definition of "reservation" and "near reservation," as defined in § 54.400(e), must ensure that its qualification criteria are reasonably designed to apply to low-income individuals living in such areas.

(b) To qualify to receive Lifeline service in a state that does not mandate state Lifeline support, a consumer's income, as defined in § 54.400(f), must be at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or a consumer must participate in one of the following federal assistance programs: Medicaid; Food Stamps; Supplemental Security Income; Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8); Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program; National School Lunch Program's free

lunch program; or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

(c) A consumer that lives on a reservation or near a reservation, but does not meet the qualifications for Lifeline specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, nonetheless shall be a "qualifying low-income consumer" as defined in § 54.400(a) and thus an "eligible resident of Tribal lands" as defined in § 54.400(e) and shall qualify to receive Tiers One, Two, and Four Lifeline service if the individual participates in one of the following federal assistance programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs general assistance; Tribally administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Head Start (only those meeting its income qualifying standard); or National School Lunch Program's free lunch program. Such qualifying low-income consumer shall also qualify for Tier-Three Lifeline support, if the carrier offering the Lifeline service is not subject to the regulation of the state and provides carrier-matching funds, as described in § 54.403(a)(3). To receive Lifeline support under this paragraph for the eligible resident of Tribal lands, the eligible telecommunications carrier offering the Lifeline service to such consumer must obtain the consumer's signature on a document certifying under penalty of perjury that the consumer receives benefits from at least one of the programs mentioned in this paragraph or paragraph (b) of this section, and lives on or near a reservation, as defined in § 54.400(e). In addition to identifying in that document the program or programs from which that consumer receives benefits, an eligible resident of Tribal lands also must agree to notify the carrier if that consumer ceases to participate in the program or programs. Such qualifying low-income consumer shall also qualify for Tier-Three Lifeline support, if the carrier offering the Lifeline service is not subject to the regulation of the state and provides carrier-matching funds, as described in § 54.403(a)(3).

(d) In a state that does not mandate state Lifeline support, each eligible telecommunications carrier providing Lifeline service to a qualifying low-income consumer pursuant to paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section must obtain

that consumer's signature on a document certifying under penalty of perjury that:

(1) The consumer receives benefits from one of the programs listed in paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section, and identifying the program or programs from which that consumer receives benefits, or

(2) The consumer's household meets the income requirement of paragraph (b) of this section, and that the presented documentation of income, as described in §§ 54.400(f), 54.410(a)(ii), accurately represents the consumer's household income; and

(3) The consumer will notify the carrier if that consumer ceases to participate in the program or programs or if the consumer's income exceeds 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

[65 FR 47905, Aug. 4, 2000, as amended at 68 FR 41942, July 16, 2003; 69 FR 34600, June 22, 2004]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 69 FR 34600, June 22, 2004, § 54.409 paragraph (d) was added. This paragraph contains information collection and recordkeeping requirements and will not become effective until approval has been given by the Office of Management and Budget.

**§ 54.410 Certification and Verification of Consumer Qualification for Lifeline.**

(a) *Certification of income.* Consumers qualifying under an income-based criterion must present documentation of their household income prior to enrollment in Lifeline.

(1) By one year from the effective date of these rules, eligible telecommunications carriers in states that mandate state Lifeline support must comply with state certification procedures to document consumer income-based eligibility for Lifeline prior to that consumer's enrollment if the consumer is qualifying under an income-based criterion.

(2) By one year from the effective date of these rules, eligible telecommunications carriers in states that do not mandate state Lifeline support must implement certification procedures to document consumer-income-based eligibility for Lifeline prior to that consumer's enrollment if the consumer is qualifying under the income-

based criterion specified in § 54.409(b). Acceptable documentation of income eligibility includes the prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return, current income statement from an employer or paycheck stub, a Social Security statement of benefits, a Veterans Administration statement of benefits, a retirement/pension statement of benefits, an Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation statement of benefits, federal or tribal notice letter of participation in General Assistance, a divorce decree, child support, or other official document. If the consumer presents documentation of income that does not cover a full year, such as current pay stubs, the consumer must present three consecutive months worth of the same types of document within that calendar year.

(b) *Self-certifications.* After income certification procedures are implemented, eligible telecommunications carriers and consumers are required to make certain self-certifications, under penalty of perjury, relating to the Lifeline program.

(1) An officer of the eligible telecommunications carrier in a state that mandates state Lifeline support must certify that the eligible telecommunications carrier is in compliance with state Lifeline income certification procedures and that, to the best of his/her knowledge, documentation of income was presented.

(2) An officer of the eligible telecommunications carrier in a state that does not mandate state Lifeline support must certify that the eligible telecommunications carrier has procedures in place to review income documentation and that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the carrier was presented with documentation of the consumer's household income.

(3) Consumers qualifying for Lifeline under an income-based criterion must certify the number of individuals in their households on the document required in § 54.409(d).

(c) *Verification of continued eligibility.* Consumers qualifying for Lifeline may be required to verify continued eligibility on an annual basis.

(1) By one year from the effective date of these rules, eligible telecommunications carriers in states that